

D. Birch In Norfolk Street
SOME
OBSERVATIONS *J. Pi*

On the USE of the
A G A R I C,
And its INSUFFICIENCY in
STOPPING HÆMORRHAGES
AFTER
CAPITAL OPERATIONS,
IN A
L E T T E R
TO A
SURGEON in the COUNTRY.

By GEORGE NEALE,

Surgeon to the LONDON-HOSPITAL.



L O N D O N:

Printed for JACOB ROBINSON, at the Golden
Lion, in *Ludgate-street*. MDCCCLVII.

[Price One Shilling.]

17

SOME

OBSEVATION

On the USE of

A C A R C

ADMINISTRATIVE

STOPPING MEMORIALS

ATTN

CAPITAL OPERATIONS

IN A

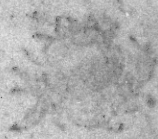
L E T E R

TO A

SURGEON in the County

BY GEORGE W. W. W.

Surgeon to the London Hospital



L O W D O N

For James Robinson, at the Golden
in London, W.C. 1871.
[Price One Shilling]

[1]



: S I R,

THAT I may perform the promise, which so long ago I made you, I shall now present you with an account of the success which hath attended the application of the Agaric in town: And this I shall do, not only from my own observation, but also from that of others, whose judgment and veracity you may depend on. And altho' I do not pretend to take notice of every ingenious performance, which hath been already published on this subject; yet, as I shall relate nothing but facts, I apprehend the following observations will be sufficient for your information. And, indeed, you should have heard sooner from me, had I not entertained some hopes of seeing a further account of

B

Mr.

Mr. Warner's success in the use of the Agaric: His first applications, it seems, answered in every respect; and he was pleased to inform the public, very soon, with his success: This raised the hopes and expectations of every practitioner; and I am not surprized you should be so desirous of knowing what has been further done in this affair: But, alas! how great must your disappointment be, when I tell you, that it is universally rejected; and that, after repeated and numberless trials, it is now entirely laid aside, as altogether insufficient and unsafe? This is very well known to all the surgeons in town; and I was in hopes that the same hand which had given the Agaric a reputation it did not deserve, would have been so kind as to favour the world with the many reasons which must, long before now, have convinced him how little dependance can be placed on this pre-

pretended styptic, and how often, indeed, he has been obliged to lay it aside, and apply to the ligature.

In order, therefore, that you may be acquainted how the Agaric came to be used in England, and when it was first introduced, as a specific in stopping violent hæmorrhages, after amputation; you must know that at Paris all encouragement is given, and all respect is paid, by that worthy society the academy of surgeons, to any gentleman of the faculty who proposes a new discovery; whether the gentleman proposing it be a member of the academy, or not; a native or a foreigner. That, on all such occasions, a deputation, or a select committee, is immediately appointed by the academy, to make what inquiries and experiments they think fit, and report the result of them; and that this was the method in which they proceeded with respect to the Agaric,

whose virtues, or styptical qualities, monsieur Broffard, of Berry, had aver'd. It was first tried, and that with success, in the year 1750, upon an adult patient, at the hospital of the Invalids, after an amputation of the leg. It was next tried at the hospital of the Charity, in the presence of monsieur Faget, the senior surgeon, upon two persons who had been overrun by a waggon, and who had each of them one leg crush'd in a miserable manner. Amputation was perform'd upon both these patients, in the presence of monsieur Broffard. A success, equal to the former, attended these last operations; yet both the patients died, the first on the fifth the other on the ninth day, tho' without any hæmorrhage. The next accurate observer after monsieur Faget was the celebrated monsieur Morand, who made trial of the Agaric, with equal safety in the
case

case of a smaller wound ; a wound occasioned by the point of a sword, in the bending of the arm. These events appearing so much to favour the styptical energy of the Agaric, raised our expectations so high that every body, I believe, at that time, began to think, and I own I was one of the number, that we should scarcely ever again have any occasion for the ligature.

Thus the Agaric came first into vogue ; and the discoverer of it, monsieur Brossard, having acquitted himself to the satisfaction of the academy, was handsomely rewarded by the king.

Since these first trials, we have likewise been favoured in the Philosophical Transactions, with the extracts of two letters of Mr. James Latterman, a student in physic and surgery at Paris, to his friend Dr. Schlosser in London, dated January and February, 1755, giving an account of the

the prodigious and never-failing success of the Agaric, in all the cases where it had been applied, at the Hotel Dieu and la Charité hospitals; but as he omits to mark the age, constitution, or particular symptoms of the subjects, his account must be very unsatisfactory to all those who would form an exact judgment of this matter. And indeed as he is so incorrect in his descriptions, and so very sanguine in his assertions, I should naturally be inclined to think that he represents things rather as he would wish them to be, than as they really are; and this I have the more reason to believe, as a gentleman who lately came from Paris informed me, that the Agaric has entirely lost its reputation there, not only in the public hospitals, but likewise all over the kingdom, on account of its experienced insufficiency: and I am greatly strengthened in this opinion
by

by the discredit it has so deservedly fallen into with us.

Having thus shortly stated the progress of this affair in Paris, I shall now lay before you what hath happened in town.

The experiments performed by our own countryman, the ingenious Mr. Warner, having contributed no less to spread the fame of this new styptic here, than those of messieurs Faget and Morand, already recounted, had formerly done to give it vogue in France, I will lay before you, in his own words almost, the state in which he found those patients unto whom he so successfully applied the Agaric.

Mr. Warner's first case is of a patient aged fifty one, who had been long afflicted with an ulcer in his leg, which at length became so general (occasioned by an impoverishment of the whole mass of blood, and a constant flow fever with which he had been for
some

some time afflicted) as to destroy the greatest part of the tendons and muscles, from the calf of the leg down to the ancle. The discharge from the wound had been for some weeks so excessive, as to reduce him to the greatest extremity, and the whole substances of the tibia and fibula appeared quite rotten for a considerable length.

The second case is of a very lusty woman, thirty-eight years of age, who had been afflicted for some time with a diseased breast, which at length became cancerous. The basis of the breast was much larger than common, and was complicated with a considerable schirrous knot, which extended to the arm-pit.

Case the third is of a boy aged twelve years, who was admitted into the hospital, with a complaint in one of his ancles, and feet, with which he had been afflicted for some time, the disease was an abscess in
the

the joint of his ankle, and he had another abscess on the upper part of the same foot, which had discharged, and continued to discharge, so much as to waste his whole limb, to bring on an hectic fever, and to render him incapable of putting his foot to the ground, without giving excessive pain; he had very little appetite; and the ligaments of the ankle and foot, as well as the bones, were much enlarged, and became carious.

Case the fourth, is of a man, aged fifty-four, who was admitted into the hospital with a mortification in his foot; which, notwithstanding all the means used in physic and surgery, for his relief, continued to advance, till it extended to about two inches above the joint of the ankle, where at length it stopped, after having destroyed all the tendons, ligaments, and periosteum, which belong to the neighbouring

C

bouring parts. The patient was of a very bad habit of body; his countenance was fallow, his pulse quick and languid; he was in a very weak state, and his whole mass of blood greatly impoverished: he at the same time had a mortification in the other foot, which deprived him of all his toes; when the mortification was separated, and his habit of body improved, by proper medicines and time, the amputation of the limb was advised, and he consented to it.

The fifth, and last case, is of a young man, twenty-four years of age, who was admitted into the hospital on account of a disease in his left foot: the part was much enlarged and inflamed; he had a fever; and there was a considerable collection of matter, which pointed on the upper and outer part of the foot, betwixt the extremities of the tibia and fibula: the tumour was
opened

opened by a caustic, and discharged about a quart of very foetid matter. There was a second abscess formed on the inside of the leg under the tendo achillis, which was opened by incision. The disorder had been about sixteen months standing, and took its rise from a strained ancle, which was immediately succeeded with considerable pain and swelling; but by rest, and the application of warm vinegar to the part, these symptoms were soon removed, and he continued easy, and perfectly well for a few weeks, when he had the misfortune to strain the same ancle again. From the moment of the second accident he became lame, his ancle and foot swelled, and his disorder increased, for two months: in this situation he put himself under the care of an eminent surgeon. The Tumour terminated in an abscess, and was opened by incision. This collection of matter was suc-

ceeded by several others, which were opened in the same manner. The wounds were cured in about eighteen weeks, and the patient was restored to the perfect use and motion of his foot: he continued quite well for six months, when on a sudden the foot became painful, and swelled again, without any previous accident; and soon afterwards one of the former wounds broke out, from whence there arose a considerable fungus. In consequence of the disease, the leg was become wasted, he was incapable of putting his foot to the ground, he rested very little, his appetite was bad, his pulse quick and low: the whole ankle and foot were greatly enlarged. From these circumstances, and all attempts to relieve him having failed, it was judged adviseable to amputate the limb.

I have recited the above cases in Mr. Warner's own words, and all the

the subjects of them were reduced, you may perceive, to the lowest extremity ; and consequently in a state where danger from an hæmorrhage was not to be much apprehended, even altho' no other application had been made than that of dry lint and flour ; but hot oil. terebinth. would have been abundantly sufficient, in the above cases, to have prevented any returning efflux of blood, from such exhausted stumps. And as to the particular case of the breast, let me observe, that breasts often do well without any other security than the common dressing. It is not uncommon, after the extirpation of a breast, of whatever dimension, to meet with a profuse hæmorrhage at first, which in a few moments ceases of itself, and that before so much as any one vessel has been properly secured. The largest breast I ever saw amputated bled very freely during the

the operation, but ceased before that was quite finished, so as to give the surgeon no trouble of taking up any vessel; nor was there the least bleeding afterward. This indeed, in so large a breast, was a rare circumstance; hæmorrhages frequently ensuing upon the symptomatic fever. For which reason I would not advise any one, who hath the needle in his power for securing the minutest artery, to confide in a treatment so hazardous as the above; for you never can, in such a case, answer to yourself for the consequences of your conduct, after the commencement of the symptomatic fever.

And altho' Mr. Warner, in the already-mentioned cases, had all the success he could desire with the Agaric; yet this can never, in my opinion, sufficiently warrant him to depend only on that way of securing the vessels, especially in subjects differently

ferently disposed and constituted : should an accident happen, for instance, to one in the summer-time, whose habit was gross, and whom it was absolutely necessary to amputate above the knee ; would it be prudent, do you think, to trust to the Agaric of the oak, or to any other styptic, to prevent the femoral artery from bleeding again ? No, I am persuaded you would act in a different manner, and not run the risk of your patient's life and of your own reputation : and indeed in such a case as this, according to my information from a gentleman, whose veracity is unquestionable, one of the greatest advocates for the Agaric, whose name I shall not mention, has been obliged, notwithstanding his never-failing success, as he says, in the use of the Agaric, to take off the dressings and secure all the blood vessels, with a needle and ligature.

May

: May I not then urge in behalf of the old method, and without offending any-body, that few surgeons in the country or on board of ships of war, or any where else but in the public hospitals, have that assistance which is requisite, to the using of Agaric with safety and success. And altho' it is not likely to do any harm in hands so careful, and so prudent, as those of monsieur Faget, and Mr. Warner ; yet were every operator to depend on the efficacy of this styptic as an absolute security against any future bleeding, must not innumerable lives be sacrificed, and the honour of the profession ruined ? Mr. Warner thinks it probable that the Agaric may be also advantageously used in stopping the bleeding from those vessels which are divided in the lateral operation, for the stone, as well as the bleeding from any other wounded vessel, which from their deep

deep situation cannot be secured with the ligature.

Happy it were, if he could oblige the public with an account of his success in such cases. I once saw an eminent surgeon cut a man for the stone, whose vessels bled copiously on the outside, all of which were well secured by ligature, and the patient soon put to bed; but in a few hours the patient became faint, and died. He had sunk under an hæmorrhage; tho' we perceived it not, till his body was opened; there being no appearance of any blood externally. I suspect the cutting gorget had divided a considerable ramification, in passing into the bladder: for we found a great quantity of grumous blood there. Quere, whether Mr. Warner applies the Agaric on all the patients he cuts for the stone, as it was impossible in the above case, and indeed must be so in every one, to judge whether there was or

D

would

would be an internal hæmorrhage, or not? And now, as I am on the subject of internal hæmorrhages, give me leave to make a small digression, on two extraordinary cases of this nature, which have made no little noise in this part of the world.

A young gentleman, who lived not far from Spital-fields, had been some years afflicted with a slight hernia: but being of a very modest disposition, and unwilling to discover his infirmity, was afraid to consult any gentleman of note. At last, however, the youth, when just going to be married, reflected on the expediency of having some speedy remedy applied to his disorder. In quest of this he run over the news-papers, where infallible practitioners charitably advertise their never-failing medicines, and boast their certain and speedy cures. The young gentleman had money; and, where that is the case, a private affair turns of-
ten

ten to special account in the hands of these men of industry ; though this gentleman's malady was only a small returnable hernia, yet an operation, as for a matter of a far more dangerous nature, was absolutely necessary to produce a fee adequate to the pretended extraordinary benefits, which were to be the result of it. The patient had an intire confidence in the skill and integrity of his surgeon ; and was particularly charmed with the circumstance of his doing every thing alone, without any assistant or witness. In this manner therefore, was the operation performed, as for a bubonocoele. The unhappy victim, an hour afterwards, sent for a friend, who, upon viewing the condition he was in, and the occasion of it, honestly told him, he had played the fool with himself. This was too true ; for in six hours afterwards he died. Next day our operator came, attended only by an

intimate of his own, to open him. The friends of the deceased however, not being satisfied with the account these persons gave of the case, prudently called in a surgeon of real judgment and honour, to inspect the body; who found that an operation for the bubonocoele had been really performed. A portion of the omentum had been taken away, and a large quantity of extravasated blood was in the cavity of the abdomen. This last circumstance was occasioned, I suppose, by a division of the epigastric artery; which some authors seem to apprehend no danger from, in this operation, tho' I must own I cannot help viewing it in another light.

The second, which happened at the other end of the town, was almost parallel to this in every circumstance; the subject was healthy and strong, the case a slight hernia like the first; and, what is most shocking

shocking to relate, the same unfeeling operator performed the same unnecessary operation upon him ; and, as it was natural to expect, with no better success.

On this occasion I cannot help expressing the sense I have of those obligations, which, not only the honest practitioners of surgery, but the public in general lie under, to Messieurs Serjeants Ranby and Hawkins, for what they have done, and what they have suffered in endeavouring to maintain the honour of the faculty, and in rescuing the lives of their fellow-subjects from imminent dangers ; yet their efforts in so laudable an undertaking have been attended with a circumstance so particularly injurious to one of these gentlemen, that an honest man cannot reflect on it without wonder and indignation. And, is it not alarming, is it not shameful, that so many swarms of pretenders to chimerical

cal nostrums and cures, should in such a city as this, and among so intelligent a people, find so much encouragement; men in authority patronize them, and all ranks fly to them, for what no man of real skill and reputation can undertake to do; yet these creatures, who promise every thing, do in reality perform nothing but the certain ruin and destruction of those, who put any confidence in the vaunts of such impudent boasters. Of late the Bougie is risen into vogue, and is like to employ as many venders shortly as the court or lady's plaster. All the disorders of the urethra are to fly before it. But what mischiefs may it not occasion, in injudicious hands? Would those who unhappily place their refuge in vain pretenders, apply to men of character in the profession, many a painful operation would be avoided, and many an individual saved from death, who,

as

as matters are now conducted, perish by their own folly.

But, to return to our subject, our friend Mr. Mason is, as far as I know, the only person in this town beside Mr. Warner, who has appeared an advocate for the Agaric, in several passages of his pamphlet, entitled, 'Extracts from an old Treatise of Surgery, &c.' which he published soon after this supposed styptic was introduced amongst us. One of those passages I shall quote, after intimating that the book, from which he has taken his extracts, was written by Felix Wartz, a surgeon at Basil, in Switzerland. As there is a translation of this old author into French, 'It is not unlikely, says Mr. Mason, ' Monsieur Broffard took the hint ' from him of using and extending ' the application of these kind of ' substances to those great and fortunate instances he has done; an ' event which must procure him the ' greatest

' greatest praise, as it is substituting
 ' a very tender, in the room of a
 ' very painful method, and which
 ' humanity could only have wished,
 ' but not have expected.' This
 passage alone is sufficient, I think,
 to prove that Mr. Mason, had then
 a great opinion of the Agaric, or
 Monsieur Broffard's fungus; but I
 have since that time been so often
 present with him where the Agaric
 has been ineffectually used, that I
 am certain he is now fully convinced
 of its insufficiency; and is too pru-
 dent a surgeon to trust to the uncer-
 tainty of this or that styptic, to se-
 cure any large blood vessel after any
 of the capital operations; such, for
 instance as amputating above or be-
 low the knee, or taking an arm off
 at the articulation of the scapula.
 Should we, in these cases, take up
 the larger vessels, and leave only
 the minuter arteries to be secured by
 the Agaric; these smaller vessels
 might

might become so dilated, after the commencement of the symptomatic fever, that the pressure of the Agaric, or its styptical qualities, whatever they may be, would not prove sufficient to stop such a profuse hæmorrhage. For we know that violent bleeding may be, and often is, the effect of overlooking or neglecting an artery so very small that it did not bleed, or even perhaps at first appear. This hæmorrhage, after dressing, is a circumstance so very dreadful to the patient, and so troublesome to the operator, that it ought not to be hazarded. I have also seen messieurs Ford and Thornhill's letters on this subject, published in the Philosophical Transactions; Mr. Ford, who has made use of the Agaric, candidly attributes its success to its texture, rather than to any stypticity in it; and gives an instance of his using the fungus vinosus* instead

* This is to be met with on old casks in wine vaults;

stead of the Agaric, and that with as much success. Here then we see a second substance equal in merit with the Agaric in stopping any hæmorrhage after capital operations.

But be this as it may, prudent men will certainly be very cautious in trusting either of them in dangerous cases. Mr. Thornhill seems to expect great assistance from the Agaric, not only in restraining of bleedings from the arteries after an amputation, but likewise in floodings, and other female complaints, upon its being injected into the uterus: all which he had happily experienced. But with the utmost respect to this very sanguine gentleman, who is so warm in his own opinion *as to tax with a narrow selfish way of thinking every man who differs from him*, I hope he will give me leave to suggest, that having

ing vaults; and could we get some of that which is on the Florence casks, it might perhaps answer much better.

ing preconceived a favourable opinion of the Agaric, he might very well attribute to that an effect, in the female case especially, which proceeded from another cause.

And I own I am at a loss to conceive, in what manner this Agaric was injected ; for as the most sanguine advocates of this simple agree, that its great virtue consists in its specific texture, they must necessarily allow that it cannot be discompounded without losing all pretensions to its styptical efficacy : how then can it be supposed to have any effect when in decoction, infusion, or tincture ? And I hope he will likewise give me leave to observe, that we are in no want of styptics ; and yet I believe it would be looked upon as a dangerous practice to inject any of them, or even any kind of injection how mild soever, into the uterus in an immoderate flux of the menses, or otherwise, and that

on many accounts. If there is a foreign body in the uterus, the discharge of it should be encouraged; and there is no occasion for any styptical injection, where the delivery is compleat; nor any danger of an hæmorrhage after the fœtus and placenta are properly extracted; for the womb, by its own natural contraction, will do all that business of itself, without any foreign aid. Appearances sometimes, especially in matters of this sort, are very equivocal; and we may easily mistake the causes and effect of things, merely because these happen to be coincident.

The miller, who had his arm torn off, is remembered by every body; more considerable blood vessels were upon that occasion ruptured, than perhaps in any case whatever taken notice of by the advocates of the Agaric. Bleedings of the most profuse kind might have been expected from it; and yet, either through an
extra-

extraordinary twisting of the blood-vessels, or their having shrunk more than usual within the muscles, this almost unparalleled wound was attended with a very inconsiderable hæmorrhage, nor needed any other dressing, than that of lint and flour assisted by a little warm oil of tereb. But had the Agaric in this instance chanced to have been applied, what honours and reputation would it not have gained on this occasion, and how many reasons might not a fertile brain have devised to account for this great and unheard-of sanative virtue?

The ingenious Mr. Andrews, surgeon to the Duke, informed me, that His Royal Highness hearing of the good success with which the Agaric had been used in one of our public hospitals, was pleased to order some trials to be made of it under his own inspection, on brute subjects. To this end some of Mr. Warner's Agaric was

was procured, that being deemed the very best sort; and experiments were carefully made with it, in the Duke's presence, on two or three colts, which had been docked for the purpose. Had the Agaric succeeded in these instances, where the divided arteries were few and small, and where it must absolutely have answered had it been endued with any virtue at all; his Royal Highness, attentive to every thing in any way conducive to the welfare of mankind, designed some farther experiments. But, as an absolute disappointment attended the first trial, it was in vain to proceed any farther.

I beg leave here to observe, that were the Agaric even capable of suppressing an hæmorrhage in a horse, yet this ought hardly to induce us to expect the same effect from it on its application to the human species; for the arteries of a horse are more minute, and its blood more grumous,

mous, than that of the human body.

We likewise see, that the gentlemen of the academy of surgeons at Paris objected to any consequence being drawn from the good effects of Agaric on brutes; because, say they, in many animals, as in dogs particularly, the great arteries stop of their own accord; and rarely any dogs die from an hæmorrhage, their blood being more disposed to congeal, and by that means stops the discharge: this may likewise be said of horses. And surely if the Agaric was found insufficient to stop the bleeding upon docking, notwithstanding the great ease with which our farriers do it every day, it will follow, that the Agaric must have still less effect upon the human species, where there is not that great and natural disposition to healing, and where the blood is generally more attenuated, and the arteries beat much stronger. The

The advocates for Agaric insinuate, as I am told, that it is preventive of that truly terrible symptom, the locked jaw ; a symptom, which they, it seems, attribute greatly to the use of the needle and ligature. Now, tho' a locked jaw may be subsequent to the ligature, it does not follow that it is a consequence of it. That fatal symptom appears on several other occasions.

I lately had a man under my care, for a slight contusion on the exterior ancle ; who, when he was so far recovered of this hurt as to be able to go out of the hospital, was seized with this disorder ; and, notwithstanding the assistance of two eminent physicians, died of it the next day. I have known it ensue upon slight lacerations, incisions, and even upon a burn. Horses are very liable to it, especially on docking ; as I have been informed by several gentlemen, who lost theirs in that manner. These,

These, and other pretensions of the like kind in favour of the Agaric, together with the success ascribed to it by the several ingenious gentlemen already named, excited the public attention, and engaged many of the most skilful surgeons in this city to have recourse to it. But with what success it was employed, I leave you to collect from the following facts.

The first ingenious gentleman, who gave it a fair trial, but whose name I have not leave to mention, tho' the case be known to most of the faculty in town, amputated a woman's leg in one of our public hospitals, and finished the operation with some of that Agaric, which was sent as a specimen to the Royal Society; the patient died in less than six hours after the application of the Agaric, of an hæmorrhage and nothing else.

F

Some

Some time after, a lady in St. James's-street, had a schirrous breast taken off by the same surgeon. Of this I have been informed by the gentleman in whose care she was left. Agaric alone was used as the means of stopping the vessels; but in a few hours after the operator had left her, a violent effusion of blood succeeded, which could not be effectually stopped, but by actually securing the vessels with the needle and ligature. This was done in the operator's absence, and before he could return to the lady's assistance; and she was perfectly cured.

In two amputations I saw, one above, and the other below the knee, the muscles were so tender from abscesses, that it was thought advisable either to try the Agaric, or to use the actual cautery; but as the last is a cruel and uncertain method, for, when used, it only yields security for a few days, the Agaric was ap-

applied ; and altho' the same precautions were taken, as are mentioned by the most sanguine advocates for this specific, both the patients died of an hæmorrhage.

I have often made use of the Agaric*, but with no better success (in small operations) such as that of the temporal artery being partly divided, and have frequently seen my brother surgeons, after amputating some part of the extremities of a human body, apply the Agaric without obtaining any other advantage, than what would have followed the application of the fungus vinosus.

F 2

To

* Plenty of this excrescence may be got in England, especially at this time, when oak is cut down in such quantities for ship-building. I had some very fine from the New Forest in Hampshire, and the county of Sussex; and indeed most other counties supply enough of it, and as good as can be desired. It having been suggested, that our British Agaric was inferior in virtue to the foreign, I procured Agaric from several parts abroad, but can discern no superior quality in the foreign.

To obviate the objection, that the Agaric which I used or saw used, in the cases above-mentioned, may not have been equal to that which other gentlemen used in similar occasions; let me subjoin a case or two more.

The ingenious Mr. Belcher, one of the surgeons of Guy's Hospital, gave to Mr. Grindall, one of the surgeons of the London Hospital, a quantity of what has been allowed to be the very best Agaric; Mr. Grindall put it to as fair a trial as could be wished; and, at the same time, favoured me with some of it to use on a poor man, who now lives, I think, with Mr. Debonnaire, at Bromley by Bow. We both of us staid, with our respective patients, almost a whole day, without perceiving the least advantage from the Agaric; the ligature was afterwards used to both, and they did well.

I have often seen Mr. Risolier and Mr. Thompson, both surgeons to the London Hospital, give this fancied specific all the trials any person who is an advocate for it could desire, and that without the least benefit to the patient.

I shall just mention one case more, as the person upon whom the operation was performed, was afterwards under the care of Mr. Paul, an eminent surgeon at St. Thomas's. This person, who was a patient of Mr. Chapman's, a surgeon at Rotherhith, had cut himself on the internal ancle with an adze; the wound had been healed, but had broke out again; with this remarkable circumstance, that during twenty-four hours, before I saw him, such a considerable quantity of blood had been lost as reduced him very low, and obliged the surgeon to use the tourniquet. Agaric being then in repute, the gentlemen requested me to try whether

I

that

that would effectually stop the bleeding; and, having several sorts with me, I applied what I thought the best: I staid almost all the afternoon with him, without perceiving any success from it; before I took my leave, I attempted the needle and ligature, hoping by that means to have secured the vessel, but was disappointed: for when I came to tie the parts, they were so tender, that they would not bear the ligature. This method failing, I had recourse to warm ol. tereb. with lint, flour, &c. and a tight bandage to secure them on; and, for fear of any accident, I put on the tourniquet, before I took my leave, advising to send the patient, when able to bear the fatigue of it, to the nearest hospital. He was accordingly moved to St. Thomas's, where, under the care of Mr. Paul aforesaid, he was perfectly cured; and, if I am rightly informed, the dressings for-

formerly applied continued on for some days.

These are the few instances of the fallibility of the Agaric, out of a great many that have come to my knowledge, which I thought proper to send you. I could have lengthened this letter considerably, had I descended to relate to you every artifice which has been used to support its credit, and that with so great a degree of partiality that I decline the mentioning of them, lest it should be thought in me invidious and reflecting: but how ungenerous was this proceeding, in those who were willing by these means to continue to impose on mankind, I leave you to judge! I am sensible, that what I have often said on this subject must naturally have drawn on me the ill-will, not to say the hatred, of some people; but, as I desire nothing but the public good, and have no other view than the
service

service of my country, I desire you will be pleased to communicate this letter to all your physical acquaintance; nay, even to print it, if you please: for tho' I am sensible, how unequal I am to appear in print, yet as I shudder to think what mischief the use of Agaric may be productive of in practice, and how many brave people may lose their lives merely on its account, I had rather be criticised for want of style or method, than to sit tamely still, and hear of the disasters produced by the dependance on this generally ineffectual simple; and hope, that such as may be inclined to answer this letter, and to support the credit of Agaric against what I have said to lessen it, will be so kind to assure the world, that the tourniquet has not been continued upon the stump a much greater time than is usual after amputation; whether even the stumps have not often on this occasion, not
only

only been livid but also partly gangrened, to the no small addition of pain and danger to the patient : whether partial compresses have not been applied and tightly bound on the course of the artery, as far as could be done, in order to prevent the efflux of blood, and whether after all these and other endeavours they have not been obliged to come to the ligature at last ? I will not suppose that any died for want of it ; but if the operator or some skilful person was not at hand, it must have been the natural consequence.

Were I to relate every instance of which I have been credibly informed, wherein many others, besides those already taken notice of, have been deceived in their expectations from the agaric, it would carry me far beyond the limits of a letter.

Had the virtue of this styptic been adequate to our first sanguine wishes

G

and

and hopes, sure I am, every one of the profession would have rejoiced at the acquisition of so invaluable a remedy, and adopted most gladly so secure and easy a method of treating their patients, instead of the acutely painful one of the needle and ligature. Most happy should I in particular think myself, could I find out a way of stopping effectually the hæmorrhage, after amputation, without occasioning that misery, which attends the common method of taking up the vessels.

What first determined me to be more particular in my observations, in relation to the Agaric, was a well-timed pamphlet, published by an ingenious surgeon of the navy, one Mr. Henry Parker, who lately lived at Sandwich in Kent; and who at that time, tho' he candidly acknowledges, he had not had an opportunity to try it, earnestly recommends

mends to every practitioner to be on his guard, and not to trust to this new remedy, farther than was warranted by undoubted and repeated observations. These I have carefully made ; and as my situation gave me frequent opportunities which Mr. Parker had not, I thought it my duty to publish them, in order to prove from facts, the insufficiency of the Agaric, which Mr. Parker, from his great knowledge of the human structure, and of medicines, had already, with so much judgment, suspected. My opinion therefore is, that tho' the Agaric may have succeeded sometimes, yet this success cannot sufficiently warrant any future confidence in it, as the few instances we have of its doing any service was on subjects whose constitutions were much impaired by illness, or ulcers of long standing ; such as were those whose cases

are recorded by Mr. Warner ; and, if I mistake not, those of Paris, who must have been in nearly the same circumstances, if we consider the effects which the Agaric has produced with us in England. And I have from repeated trials, a few of which I have given you as above, been fully confirmed in this opinion and convinced of its insufficiency, and can assure you that if an impartial register had been kept, wherever it was used, it would clearly appear that if it succeeded once, it fail'd at least ten times ; and that with this melancholy aggravation, that where it failed it often was productive of death. Why then, since this is the case, is it not the duty of every one who is acquainted with these facts to endeavour to guard the public against an over-weening fondness for what may on so many occasions prove fatal ?

per-

personal regards ought surely to give place in a point of so much importance. But whilst I am an advocate for the needle and ligature, and against trusting to the Agaric of the oak, or any other styptical fungus, for preventing violent bleedings from any considerable arteries; I freely acknowledge that in applying the ligature several disagreeable circumstances occur: such as violent pain at the first tying of the vessels, and abscesses occasioned by the threads used in tying, which generally retard the healing of the stump. Yet were there an accident to happen to myself in perfect health, which obliged me to undergo an amputation above or below the knee; I would rather submit to the method used by the people on the African coast, tho' really a cruel one, than trust to the Agaric for securing the blood-vessels. The method used in Africa is this:
When

When any such operation as I have mentioned is to be performed, they take a sheep or a goat, and skin it ; a sufficient quantity of boiling pitch is also prepared and set near the operator, and when he has divided the muscles and bones of the limb to be lopt, they cut off rather more of the skin of the beast than will cover the wound, and pouring the boiling pitch upon it, instantly apply it to the stump ; and there it continues till all is well.

This is, as I have said already, a very cruel method, and what, by no means, I would recommend. But were not the ligature to be had, I repeat it again, my choice would be the African treatment, rather than the Agaric : by the former I might, tho' tormented, recover ; but the consequence of the latter might prove inevitable death.

I have already observed in the beginning of this letter, and hope I shall

shall be excused, if I repeat it again ; that as the good success which attended the first trials of the Agaric has alone been published to the world, whereby many of the surgeons in our fleets or army may be induced to use it on account of its being a more tender treatment, and also much easier, and of greater dispatch, than the ligature in the hurry of action ; it gave me not a little pain to see that there was not the same readiness in acquainting the public, how often and in what cases the Agaric had failed : and yet I appeal to you, whether it was not strictly the duty of every one who had by any means helped to promote a confidence in a remedy which he was now convinced, by his own experience, it no longer deserved, at a time especially when so many thousands of our fellow-subjects are daily exposing themselves to every danger

danger of war, for the good and safety of their country, and consequently at a time when the good opinion of this deceitful remedy must naturally occasion a frequent use of it, to the great detriment of those brave people who deserve every thing from us that can be done to save them. The first account indeed was kind and charitable, and calculated, no doubt, merely for the sake of the public : a new remedy, which was thought on many accounts preferable to the old method, was found out; and it was generous to acquaint the world with every circumstance relating to it : but as on farther trials it had often proved unsuccessful, why should not the public be told of this likewise? would it not have been as kind and charitable, nay would it not have been more so, as it is evident that a too great confidence in
this

this remedy has, and must necessarily very often, be productive of death itself?

I cannot finish this letter without taking notice of an unhappy notion which too many people entertain, That they cannot oblige the public more, than by giving them an account of their surprising and almost miraculous cures; when, on the contrary, it were to be wished that they would rather acquaint us where they have unexpectedly fail'd: and as a sea-chart can no ways be esteemed complete, unless it contains an accurate description of every rock and shoal which makes its navigation dangerous; so likewise an author should take care to relate impartially every circumstance which can any way contribute to the improvement of the art, and acquaint us equally with the bad as well as with the good success he has met with in his practice: this would

H

not

not only put him above any suspicion of selfish views, but would likewise be of the greatest utility to mankind, for

Ex lædentibus & juvantibus fit judicium.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

Mark-lane,

March 12, 1757.

GEO. NEALE

